

What You Need to Know About X-Rays, Teen

X-rays are pictures of the inside of your body. An X-ray machine creates these pictures using waves of energy known as radiation. Your health care provider may use X-rays to look for problems such as broken bones, joint problems, lung infections, and causes of stomach pain.

X-rays are generally considered safe for teens. However, you should take steps to limit the amount of radiation that your body receives over your lifetime.

What is involved in getting an X-ray?

In many cases, you will lie on a table for the X-ray. A protective shield or an apron made of lead may be placed over certain areas of your body to stop radiation from reaching them. This limits your radiation exposure.

The X-ray machine will send out beams of radiation pointed at the area of your body that needs to be examined. Usually, a few images are taken during the X-ray procedure. Then, the X-ray images are printed on a sheet of film or recorded digitally so a health care provider can study them. Your health care provider may show you the X-rays and explain what they show.



What are the benefits of X-rays?

X-rays are very helpful in diagnosing health problems. These are some of the benefits of X-rays:

- X-rays are fast and easy.
- X-rays do not hurt.
- X-rays do not involve any surgery or anesthesia.
- X-rays are useful in an emergency when you need a quick diagnosis.
- X-rays offer an accurate diagnosis of many types of injuries and conditions.
- X-rays usually do not cause side effects.
- The radiation exposure is very small.
- The radiation does not stay in your body after the X-ray is finished.

What are the risks of X-rays?

Being exposed to too much radiation over a lifetime can increase the risk of cancer. This can occur if you have many X-rays throughout your life. Children and teens are more sensitive to radiation than adults. If the X-ray machine is not adjusted for their smaller size, young people may receive higher doses of radiation. In addition, because young people have a longer life expectancy than adults, there is more time for any exposure to radiation to have long-term effects.

Do not get an X-ray if you are pregnant or may be pregnant. X-rays cause damage to a developing baby.

What questions should I ask my health care provider?

Before getting an X-ray, ask your health care provider:

- If the X-ray is necessary to diagnose your condition.
- If the X-ray machine is made for teens.
- If the X-ray machine setting can be lowered for your age and size.
- If devices will be used to protect other parts of your body from radiation.
- If there are other options if you are pregnant or could be pregnant.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.

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